

DRaaS Providers Come of Age

As more organizations embrace a cloud-first model, everything in their IT infrastructure comes under scrutiny, to include backup and recovery. A critical examination of this component of their infrastructure often prompts them to identify their primary objectives for recovery. In this area, they ultimately want simplified application recoveries that meet their recovery point and time objectives. To deliver this improved recovery experience, organizations may now turn to a new generation of disaster-recovery-as-a-service (DRaaS) offerings.

A Laundry List of DRaaS' Past Shortcomings

DRaaS may not be the first solution that comes to mind to improve their recovery experience. They may not even believe DRaaS solutions can address their recovery challenges. Instead, DRaaS may imply that organizations must first:

1. Figure out how to pay for it
2. Accept there is no certainty of success
3. Do an in-depth evaluation of their IT infrastructure and applications
4. Re-create their environment at a DR site
5. Perform time consuming tests to prove DRaaS works
6. Dedicate IT staff for days or weeks to gather information and perform DR tests

This perception about DRaaS may have held true at some level in the past. However, any organizations that still adhere to this view need to take a fresh view of how DRaaS providers now deliver their solutions.

The Evolution of DRaaS Providers

DRaaS providers have evolved in four principal ways to take the pain out of DRaaS and deliver the simplified recovery experiences that organizations seek.



1. They recognize recovery experiences are not all or nothing events.

In other words, DRaaS providers now make provisions in their solutions to do partial on-premises recoveries. In the past, organizations may have only called upon DRaaS providers when they needed a complete off-site DR of all applications. While some DRaaS providers still operate that way, that no longer applies to all of them.

Now organizations may call upon a DRaaS provider to help with recoveries even when they experience just a partial outage. This application recovery may occur on an on-premises backup appliance provided by the DRaaS provider as part of its offering.

2. They use clouds to host recoveries.

Some DRaaS providers may still make physical hosts available for some application recoveries. However, most make use of purpose-built or general-purpose clouds for application recoveries. DRaaS providers use these cloud resources to host an organization's applications to perform DR testing or a real DR. Once completed, they can re-purpose the cloud resources for DR and DR testing for other organizations.

3. They gather the needed information for recovery and build out the templates needed for recovery.

Knowing what information to gather and then using that data to recreate a DR site can be a painstaking and lengthy process. While DRaaS providers have not eliminated this task, they shorten the time and effort required to do it. They know the right questions to ask and data to gather to ensure they can recover your environment at their site. Using this data, they build templates that they can use to programmatically recreate your IT environment in their cloud.

4. They can perform most or all the DR on your behalf.

When a disaster strikes, the stress meter for IT staff goes straight through the roof. This stems from, in part, few, if any of them have ever been called upon to do a DR. As a result, they have no practical experience in performing one.

In response to this common shortfall, a growing number of DRaaS providers perform the entire DR, or minimally assist with it. Once they have recovered the applications, they turn control of the applications over to the company. At that point, the company may resume its production operations running in the DRaaS provider's site.

DRaaS Providers Come of Age

Organizations should have a healthy fear of disasters and the challenge that they present for recovery. To pretend that disasters never happen ignores the realities that those in [Southern California](#) and [Louisiana](#) may face right now. Disasters do occur and organizations must prepare to respond.

DRaaS providers now provide a means for organizations to implement viable DR plans. They provide organizations with the means to recover on-premises or off-site and can do the DR on their behalf. Currently, small and midsize organizations

remain the best fit for today's DRaaS providers. However, today's DRaaS solutions foreshadow what should become available in the next 5-10 years for large enterprises as well.